The University of Alberta Department of Music presents:

Music at Convocation Hall

Quatuor International de Saxophones

Jean-Pierre Baraglioli, soprano
Keiji Munesada, alto
William Street, tenor
Richard Dirlam, baritone

Sunday, October 5, 2008
1:15 pm Pre-Concert Talk by Dr Charles Stolte
2:00 pm Concert
Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Program (Selections from the following)

Sechs Bagatellen for Saxophone Quartet — Günther Bialas (1907–1995)

Orsinneur pour quatre saxophones — Sylvain Kassap (b. 1956)
La Val se des Petits Objets

Sonata for Saxophone Quartet — Yusef Lateef (b. 1920)
- Movement 1
- Larghetto con molto espressione
- Minuetto allegretto

Gashoraku — Tetsunosuke Kushida (b. 1935)
- I Netori
- II Jo (Preface)
- III Ha
- IV Saibara
- V Kyu

Quatuor de saxophones — Jean-Michel Damase (b. 1928)
- I Allegro
- II Andante
- III Allegro moderato

Six Bagatelles — György Ligeti (1923–2006) arr Fabio Oehrli

Pavane de la Belle dormant — Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)
- Petit Poucet
- Laidronnette impératrice des pagodes
- Les entretiens de la belle et la bête
- Le jardin féerique

Faust for Saxophone Quartet — Carleton Macy
- Persona 1: Yearning (Dr. Faust)
- Persona 2: Virtue and Anguish (Margaret)
- Persona 3: Devil's Play (Mephistopheles)

Program Notes
by Andrea Eng

Günter Bialas (1907-1995)

Günter Bialas was born in 1907 in Germany where his father was a theatre manager. Music and art were therefore a major part of his life from a very early age. Bialas studied piano and theory in his teens, and then attended University of Breslau (1926–8) where he studied literature and musicology. He taught music for some years before being called up for military duty in 1941. After WWII, he returned to teaching music and held various positions at the Weimar Musikhochschule, the Nordwestdeutsche Musikakademie in Detmold. In 1959, Bialas was appointed professor of composition at the Musikhochschule in Munich, a post that he held until 1974.

Due to the Nazi regime and their strict controls over many cultural elements, information about the new and innovative compositional styles that arose elsewhere in Europe in the years during and immediately preceding WWII did not become known in Germany until after 1945. As a result, Bialas was exposed to many of these new styles all at once in the years immediately following the war; the nature of this exposure to a wide variety of styles means that Bialas did not latch on to any one style with any sort of dogmatic vigour as did many of his European contemporaries. He did, however, reject serialism for a much freer sense of tonality and atonality that can be heard in much of his music.

The *Sechs Bagatellen for Saxophone Quartet* (1985) was written for the well-known Raschèr Saxophone Quartet. It is somewhat expressionistic in style, and uses an economy of musical material. As a set of bagatelles, the pieces are each quite short and there is an overall lightness of tone. This lightness, however, is underscored with a sense of seriousness that adds a special flavour to the set and it is here that Bialas's expressionistic style can be experienced. The many long sustained tones give the work an overall ethereal quality, interspersed with moments of busy, almost chaotic sounds. This combination seems to reflect of the ebb and flow of calm and chaos in daily life.

Sylvain Kassap (b 1956)

French composer Sylvain Kassap is mostly self-taught in music. His experience includes playing several instruments in rock bands, as well as playing saxophone and clarinet. He has established various touring musical groups and has toured throughout the world. His music is flavoured with sounds of traditional musics of central Europe, an interest that arises from his mixed ethnic heritage.

Mostly self–taught, Kassap's compositional style gives the listener the sense that his music is almost free improvisation, however the exact opposite is actually true. This is demonstrated in *Orsinneur pour quatre saxophones* (2000). The music is very strictly controlled, and gives it time for multiple cadenza passages for each performer. The title comes from a difference between the English and French translations of the word "pecheur". In French it translates to either 'fisher' (as in "fisherman") or 'sinner'. There is another well-known composer for saxophone in France by the name of Eric Fischer, and since his name is another translation of the word "pecheur", in the title of this work Kassap defines himself as the second translation: a "pecheur" then is either a fisher "or sinner". A clever play on words.

Yusef Lateef (b. 1920)

Yusef Lateef was born William Evans in Chattanooga, Tennessee in 1920 and in 1925 his family moved to Detroit. Evans started studying saxophone in school, and at the age of 19 also started playing the flute. From 1938 to 1950 he toured and performed with

many jazz ensembles throughout the United States, including with Dizzy Gillespie. During these years he converted to the Muslim faith, and in the mid–1950s changed his name to Yusef Lateef. After a brief hiatus to care for his ill wife in the early 1950s, Lateef returned to touring in the late 1950s, leading a wide variety of quintets and continued until 1981. During this time he also earned masters and doctoral degrees in education, and did his post-doctoral work in Nigeria in the early 1980s.

Lateef's music is influenced by his Egyptian heritage, as well as his experiences as a jazz musician and his years in Nigeria. This *Sonata for Saxophone Quartet* (1996) incorporates many of these influences and also demonstrates his very minimalistic compositional style that gives a great sense of space, while still hinting at jazz and popular music.

Tetsunosuke Kushida (b 1935)

Japanese composer Tetsunosuke Kushida was born to a musical family in 1935 and was surrounded by the music of traditional Japanese instruments. He studied mathematics at the Kyoto University of Education while also taking composition lessons, and did not embark on a career as a composer until after university.

Kushida's *Gashoraku* was commissioned by the International Saxophone Quartet in 2006 and premiered in November of that year. It is written for four performers playing a total of seven saxophones, and it requires tremendous musical versatility for all of the performers. The work draws inspiration from the Japanese musical tradition of *Gagaku*. *Gagaku* is a formal musical tradition and distinct similarities in musical style and use can also be found in China (*yayue*), Korea (*aak*), and Vietnam (*nha nhac*). *Gagaku* is a highly formalized and stylized musical tradition made up of a variety of native and foreign origin string, wind, and percussion instruments. Today *gagaku* can be found in formal Japanese court, Shinto shrines, and at other formal occasions. There are five purposes for *gagaku*; music to entertain the gods (*mikagura*); music to comfort the spirits of the imperial ancestors (*azuma asobi*); music to energize the spirit of the emperor (*ônaobi uta, yamato uta*); music to celebrate the emperor's coronation (*ôuta, kuma uta*); and music to perform the emperor's funeral (*ruika*).

Kushida's *Gashoraku* utilizes these traditional Japanese influences and sounds, but creates them on modern instruments and works well beyond the boundaries of western tonality. The work plays with the tradition of *gagaku* with five movements, each one referencing one of the different types of *gagaku* music. The second movement "Jo" is also based on one of the traditional *gagaku* instruments, called a *ryûteki* (steh-te-kee), which is an inverted flute-like instrument with a reedy, oboe like sound. Throughout the work there are some improvisatory sections that work within the traditional modes of *gagaku* music.

Jean-Michel Damase (b. 1928)

Jean-Michel Damase is a French pianist and composer. His mother was a professional harpist, and he started a music education very early in his life. He attended the École Normale de Musique in Paris in 1941, and then entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1942, where he won the *premier prix* for piano performance in 1943. In 1943, Damase began studying composition at the Conservatoire, and in 1947 he won the Prix de Rome with his cantata *Et la belle se réveilla* (1947). While at the Conservatoire, Damase was introduced to the saxophone by Conservatoire director Claude Delvincourt, who made a point of introducing it (as well as other instruments such as the double bass and viola) as courses of study at the Conservatoire in the early 1940s. These were just a few of the new courses that Delvincourt brought to the Conservatoire so as to create more spaces for students to avoid sending more young men to fight in WWII.

Damase's compositional style remains fairly close to the traditions of the Conservatoire, and he is recognized for rich orchestrations and idiomatic writing for each

instrument. This can be heard particularly in the *Quatuor pour saxophones* (1978), which was composed for the Daniel Deffayet Saxophone Quartet. The quartet uses neo-classical forms, such as a scherzo in the third movement, but the more lush neo-romantic expressions and harmonies.

György Ligeti (1923 - 2006)

Outside of western art music circles, György Ligeti is probably most well known for his film scores, including music for the Stanley Kubrick films *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *The Shining*, and *Eyes Wide Shut*, however he was a highly prolific composer in a wide variety of genres, including opera, choral, and electronic.

György (Sándor) Ligeti was born in Transylvania in 1923, but after living through both the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, he escaped to Western Europe in 1956 and eventually settled in Vienna where he became an Austrian citizen. His music plays with concepts of sound and space, and often relies on non-traditional notational styles such as graphics to notate the sounds he wants realized.

Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles* (1953) was originally written for wind quintet while Ligeti was still living under the Stalinist regime in Hungary, at a time and place when the writing and performance of innovative or experimental music was a fairly futile practice since it was not going to have a chance to be performed. Much of the music Ligeti wrote at this time in his life was filed away until after he left Hungary in the mid–1950s. The *Six Bagatelles* also draw on material from an innovative set of eleven piano pieces called *Musica ricercata* (1951–3) in which the second piece uses only two pitch classes, the third piece uses three, and so on. The original wind quintet has been re-orchestrated for saxophone quartet by Fabio Oehrli.

Maurice Ravel (1875 - 1937)

The music of Maurice Ravel is today well established in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century musical canon, which is noteworthy only because of the difficulties that he experienced during his career. (Joseph) Maurice Ravel was born in a French countryside in 1875. Shortly after his birth his family moved to Paris where Ravel would spend most of the rest of his life. His mother was Basque, and Ravel retained close feelings for the Basque traditions throughout his life.

Ravel entered the Paris Conservatoire in 1889 to study piano, only to be dismissed in 1895 for not meeting their stringent expectations. He re-entered the Conservatoire in 1897 to study composition with Gabriel Fauré, but again was dismissed in 1900. This time he continued to study with Fauré as an auditor until he finally left the Conservatoire in 1903. Ravel, like many of his contemporaries in Paris at the time, was greatly influenced by the variety of music he heard at the 1899 Paris Exposition, impressions which can be heard in much of his music after 1900. Well known for his outspokenness about various important issues for composers, Ravel was generally viewed as an 'outsider' by the established musical societies in Paris at the time. In 1909 Ravel was key player in the establishment of the Société Musicale Independante, a society dedicated to the performance of works both French and foreign, regardless of genre or style, creating a welcoming venue for many of the new compositions by himself and his contemporaries to present their new works.

Ravel's *Suite from «Ma Mere L'oye»* (1908-1910) was originally written as a suite for piano, four hands and was rescored into a fully orchestrated ballet in 1912. Here it has been re-orchestrated again from the original piano work to a work for four saxophones. This suite is a charming journey into the world of children's stories and is based on five of Charles Perrault's Mother Goose fairytales from 1697.

"*Pavane de la Belle au Bois dormant*" – Pavane for Sleeping Beauty is quiet and delicate dance with all the dignity and calm due to a sleeping princess; "*Petit Pouce*" – Tom Thumb

is evoked through small intervals of thirds and seconds (depicting his short stature) that march in almost perfect parallel motion through his journey with his family through the forest; "*Laideronette Impératrice des Pagodes*" – Empress of the Pagodas makes free use of the pentatonic sounds and minor thirds that evoke the orient. Higher pitches sparkle and blink and use aural space to create a sound of exoticism and mystery followed by a second section with a faster tempo and an air of inquisitive curiosity; "*Les Entretiens de la Belle et la Bête*" – Conversations Between Beauty and the Beast uses the extremes of register, low and with almost menacing rumbles is the Beast, and the upper register is Beauty, her voice hinting with nervous apprehension; "*Le Jardin féerique*" – the Fairy Garden is the last of the Mother Goose tales set by Ravel, where the various characters are all depicted journeying together in the garden, before departing back into their own story worlds in the wake of brilliant glissandi.

Carlton Macy (b. 1944)

Carlton Macy is an American composer and teacher at Macalester College in Minnesota. His *Faust for Saxophone Quartet* (1993) is based around Goethe's legendary story of Dr Faust and his search for perfection. Throughout the entire work, Macy uses quotations from several other works also inspired by the same story, including *The Damnation of Faust* (1846) by Berlioz, and Liszt's *Faust Symphony* (1854).

The first movement, 'Yearning' represents Faust himself, and his desire and search for perfection. Here there is a direct quotation from *The Damnation of Faust* heard in the alto saxophone. The second movement, 'Virtue and Anguish' represents Margaret, the beautiful young girl who has the misfortune of falling victim to Faust's interest in her. The third movement, 'Devil's Play' is the third character in the Faust story, Mephistopheles. This is the movement in which there are the most quotes, not only from Berlioz, but also Liszt, and several other sources, as if Mephistopheles has no cares as to where he steals his music from, and to further demonstrate his many facets.

QUATUOR INTERNATIONAL DE SAXOPHONES

The QUATUOR INTERNATIONAL DE SAXOPHONES was formed in 2000 for performances at the World Saxophone Congress in Minneapolis. It grew out of the idea that the members had adjudicated at many of the world's international competitions together, yet they had rarely performed together. Belgian, French, Japanese and American composers have written new pieces for them, including commissioned new works by composers Sylvain Kassap, Frederic Devreese and Tetsunosuke Kushida. In 2004 and 2006 they toured in France and Slovenia. A tour of Belgium took place in 2003 and 2005 hosted by Erik Clahey of Schott (Brussels). They toured Japan and Thailand in 2007.

Jean-Pierre Baraglioli (soprano saxophone) was born on 3 August 1957 in Montreuil (France). He obtained the Paris Conservatoire First Prizes in saxophone and in chamber music, the French National Prize in saxophone, was prizewinner of the Menuhin foundation, Solo saxophone player of the Grand Orchestre of the Paris Garde and the Colonne Concert Orchestra, He performs as soloist for many concerts in France and in other countries : Japan, Popular China, Germany, Latvia, Hungary, USA, Canada, etc. His curious nature leads him to organize meetings and to record music with musicians hailing from different backgrounds, such as M.Azzola, G. Beytelmann, P. Caratini, J.J. Mosalini, J.C. Fohrenbach, T. Escaich, etc. He is the instigator of the saxophone quartet 4uatre, with which he performs for many concerts and recordings. He is a musician in constant motion, who contributes a lot to the renewing of the saxophone repertoire.

William Street (alto saxophone) studied in France where he completed First prize degrees at the Bordeaux Conservatory and obtained the *Certificat d'Aptitude* and in the USA at Northwestern University. He has performed concerts in tours across the US and Canada and has performed frequently in Europe. He has presented masterclasses in London, Paris, Moscow, Kiev, Chicago, etc. and tours as a soloist and lecturer with Roger Admiral and Jean-Marie Londeix. His recordings include *héliosaxo* and *MY VERY FIRST SOLO* on Arktos recordings.

Keiji Munesada (tenor saxophone) from Japan received his training in Japan and France. He holds prizes from the Conservatory of Bordeaux and is Professor of Saxophone at the Elisabeth University of Music.

Richard Dirlam (baritone saxophone) earned First Prizes and Medals of Honor in Saxophone Performance and Chamber Music from the *Conservatoire de Musique de Bordeaux, France* while in the studio of Jean-Marie Londeix. After studies in France, Richard Dirlam performed recitals, chamber music concerts, and as a soloist with orchestra in Europe, North America, and Japan, and at the same time pursued studies in orchestral conducting and chemistry. He performs and records with the Minnesota Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble, Zenon Dance Company and other venues in North America. His discography includes the titles *She Sings She Screams*, *Pure Saxophone, I Dig* (with the Intergalactic Contemporary Ensemble), and *Sax Ascendant.* Dirlam teaches at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University in Minnesota, USA.

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